

Module 7: Creative Expression

Materials Needed

- Copies of the VELS
- Handouts
- Flip chart, markers, and tape
- 11 x 18 construction paper
- Paint, brushes, tissue paper and glue/gluesticks
- Assorted collage materials
- Clay or play dough and tools

Goals and Objectives

As a result of this module, participants will:

Related Northern Lights Core Knowledge Areas

Be familiar with the VELS Learning Goal, Definitions and Examples in the domain of creative Expression, and how this domain is connected with other domains of the VELS	Teaching and Learning
Understand that creativity is an inherent characteristic of childhood, and that there are many ways children express their creativity.	Child Development Teaching and Learning
Understand the arts as an expression of creativity, culture, and tradition as well as our legacy to the future.	Teaching and Learning Family and Community
Become familiar with a variety of media, techniques, and tools of the creative arts.	Teaching and Learning
Understand that both the process and product of creative expression have value for young children, but that the process of creativity is what is most important to children.	Child Development Teaching and Learning
Develop an appreciation for the forms of creative expression, and a way of sharing that appreciation with children.	Child Development Teaching and Learning
Strengthen the appreciation and recognition of one's own creativity and unique ways of expressing it.	Teaching and Learning Professionalism and Program Organization
Understand the adult's role in supporting children's creative expression.	Teaching and Learning Professionalism and Program Organization
Understand the role of the environment in supporting children's creative expression.	Teaching and Learning
Become familiar with community and professional resources and research on creative expression.	Family and Community

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As a result of this module, participants will:

Related Northern Lights Core Knowledge Areas

Be able to describe the development of creative expression to parents, colleagues and other adults.	Family and Community Child Development
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Note Page references to the Creative Expression domain in the Vermont Early Learning Standards in this module are noted as: “VELS” followed by the page number. For example, VELS Pg. 20. Relevant pages for this module are 20-22, 28, and 30.

Introductions and Opening Activity

- Make sure participants and the instructor introduce themselves including pertinent information about their work and work settings.
- Choose from among the following opening activities intended to tap into participant’s feelings about creative expression or to use their creative energy:
 - ? *Handout 1: Creating Something From Nothing*
 - ? *Handout 2: Red Light-Green Light The Arts Version*
 - ? *Handout 3: Start with Words*
 - ? *Handout 4: Group Drawing Activity*
 - ? Reflect and discuss with a partner: When did you get the message that you are (or aren’t) a creative person? Think back to specific memories if possible. Where were you—at home or school? When do most people identify themselves as creative or not creative? Think broadly—what are your outlets for creativity? Stretch yourself to think beyond what we normally define as creativity; in other words being creative is more than having artistic talents.
 - ? *Handout 5: How Do You Use Your Creative Thinking?*
- Instructors should facilitate a group discussion based on the opening activity chosen for this session.

Review the Standard and Domain

Have participants read the Introduction and Learning Goals and Definitions for this domain (See VELS Pgs.20-21).

If it hasn’t been used as an opening activity, have participants complete *Handout 5: How Do You Use Your Creative Thinking* and facilitate a conversation about creativity as an attitude and the balance between *making* something happen and *letting* something happen. Human beings are creative when they imagine something that doesn’t exist—including new ideas or solutions to problems. (See [For a Child, Life is a Creative Adventure: Supporting Development and Learning Through Art, music, Movement, and Dialogue.](#) Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children and Families, Head Start Bureau)

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Instructors may choose from among the following options:

- Break into groups of 3-5 and do the *Handout 6: Group Sculpture* activity. Discuss the VELS Learning Goals and Examples that were evident in this experience.

Activity: The Best Example

1. Ask participants to select one Example from VELS Pgs. 20-21 that speaks to them, or that they feel strongly about and are committed to in their work with children.
2. Have them “pitch” this example to the group as if they were trying to persuade others that this is the most important example in the domain.
3. Make sure they include a rationale for their choice, and concrete evidence of how they incorporate this example into their curriculum.

The Development of Creative Expression

Instructors should use the following key points in framing a mini-lecture on the topic of the development of creative expression, many of which originate in an article called “Promoting Creativity for Life Using Open-Ended Materials.” by Drew, W.F & B. Rankin. Young Children. 59 (4): 38-45, 2004.



Note

Since there are many creative media and forms of creative expression covered in this domain, instructors may wish to focus on what they have expertise and experience in when presenting this module. Or, they may want to team up so that more than one medium is covered. It is more important to stress that creativity and expression are multi-faceted and connected to all domains of early learning, than to provide an in-depth module on one creative medium.

- The title of this domain is Creative Expression rather than Creative Arts. We might think of this domain as being about the arts, but often people associate that with visual arts. We can't forget that many people express themselves through movement, music, story, drama, ideas and much more. Creative thinking is equally important to this domain as creative arts are.
- Play is the main ingredient in creativity; a sense of playfulness is critical to one's ability to have meaningful, productive lives. Spontaneous and creative self-expression increases children's sense of competence and well being throughout their lives.
- Through play, children also learn to appreciate their own unique approach to doing things, and the approaches of others. Working together to create something, or to solve a problem provides the environment Vygotsky talks about when he describes learning as a social activity.
- Children extend and deepen their understandings through multiple, hands-on experiences with diverse materials. The importance of hands-on learning is a foundation of early childhood education. The tools and materials that support creative expression should go beyond what we commonly associate with creative arts (paint, paper, markers, glue, brushes) to include clay, natural objects,

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fabrics, dramatic play props, musical instruments and materials to create musical instruments, and so on.

- Creative expression makes learning in the content areas of literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies meaningful and joyful for children. Teachers provide children opportunities to explore open-ended materials intentionally and with purpose, in order to promote learning in the content areas of early childhood education.
- Teachers are nourished by experiencing children's joy and learning, and when engaged in reflection, they are strengthened in their ability to promote children's creative expression.
- Appreciation of the arts further enhances children's creativity when they have opportunities to experience the art that others create. Early childhood environments should display children's creations, and they should also be places where the works of masters are displayed. The works of composers, painters, dancers, comedians, sculptors and potters and others are appropriate for inclusion in early childhood settings, and offer many rich opportunities for children to develop a vocabulary to share their impressions and opinions, ask questions and show respect for the contributions of others.
- Children develop creative expression at their own pace, but are influenced by the adults and environments in which they live and learn. See *Handout 7: Developmental Stages*.

What Does Creative Expression Look Like?

What does Creative Expression look like and how might teachers observe it in young children? An environment that supports creativity isn't one that is chaotic, where anything goes. It is a thoughtful and planned environment that offers children choices, a variety of materials, and opportunities to express themselves in all areas of the setting.

Activity: Creative Expression in Individual Children

1. Have participants picture all the children in their program.
2. Participants then list the ones they think are the most creative.
3. Ask participants: "What do you see about these children that makes you say that?"
4. Next, list the children you think are the least creative.
5. Ask participants: "What do you see about these children that makes you say that?"
6. Next, have participants picture a part of their room. Ask the following questions:
 - Which children are most creative in this area?
 - What kind of creative expression happens in this area?
 - What are the possibilities for creative expression if I combine different areas of the environment, including the outdoors?

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The question, “What do you see that makes you say that?” comes from the Visual Thinking Strategies framework that engages students in observing, thinking, and communicating about visual art and leads to children becoming respectful of differences of opinion and gain conflict resolution skills. For more information, see www.vue.org.

Reflecting on Creative Expression

Select a reflection activity from the options below:

- In pairs, participants share their earliest creative expression memory, positive or negative. If the memory is negative, what could have been done differently to make it a positive experience? If positive, what made it a positive experience?
- Do you consider yourself a creative person? In what ways are you creative? When and how did you get the idea that you are/aren't a creative person?
- Have each person reflect on how their concept of themselves as a creative person, or their earliest memories influences them as teachers of young children.

The Adult's Role in Supporting this Domain

Review the list of ideas on VELS Pg. 22 on ways adults can support children's creative expression. Ask if anyone has different ideas or disagrees with anything on this list.

Do *Handout 8: Rainbow Placemats* activity or create your own scenario for participants to experience supportive or discouraging adult attitudes related to a simple art activity.

The Role of the Environment in Supporting this Domain

Review the list on VELS Pg. 23 of ways the environment supports children's creative expression. Ask if anyone wants to add or disagree with anything on the list.

Have participants complete the checklist in *Handout 9: Does Your Classroom Encourage Creativity* from For a Child, Life is a Creative Adventure: Supporting Development and Learning Through Art, Music, Movement, and Dialogue.

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Activity: Materials that Promote Creative Expression

1. In small groups, assign a creative expression medium such as Visual Arts, Creative Dramatics, Music, or Movement.
2. Have participants make a list on flip chart paper of the tools and materials they have in the classroom that promotes creative expression for their respective media.
3. Post the lists on the wall and have people walk around and add to them.

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Reflecting on the Role of the Adult and the Environment

Reflect and respond to the following quote from Robert Henri from *The Art Spirit*, 1984, Westview Press:

“When the artist is alive in any person, whatever his kind of work may be, he becomes an inventive, searching, daring, self-expressive creature. He becomes interesting to other people. He disturbs, upsets, enlightens, and opens ways for better understanding. Where those who are not artists are trying to close the book, he opens it and shows there are still more pages possible.”

How does Henri’s quote apply to creative expression in young children, the adults who teach and care for them, and the environments in which they live and learn?

Putting It All Together

As instructors prepare to complete this module, they should be thinking about how to bring together the main points and objectives covered during the training. The following activities and scenarios are intended to involve participants in synthesizing their learning:

- Make a plan of action based on the conversations and activities in this module. Develop a concrete plan that addresses how creative expression is a part of their curriculum. Use *Handout 10: Creating an Action Plan*.
- Discuss *Handout 11, Scenario #1: Assistant teacher*.
- Discuss *Handout 11, Scenario #2: Arts Council grant*.

Conclusion

Instructor and participants review key points and identify the most important new learning that occurred. Be sure to include:

- The reason it’s called Creative Expression
- The creative process is emphasized more than the creative product, when working with young children
- Adults play a significant role in promoting children’s creativity; likewise they can also extinguish a child’s creativity and alter his or her self-concept with long-lasting effects.
- Appreciating creative expression in others is an important component in this domain. Children should have the opportunity to be exposed to a wide variety of creative expressions, including the masters as well as the work of other children.

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Handout 1: Creating Something from Nothing

Materials

Boxes or bags of odd materials. Each collection should contain materials with a deliberate omission of an important item, (e.g., one collection could contain berry baskets, paper, ribbon, beads but no scissors or tape. Another could contain pot lids, glass jars, sticks, but no spoons, lids or beans

Room Arrangement

Groups of 3-5 seated comfortably at tables.

Time

15-20 minutes, depends on your group

Goals

- To have participants work in small groups to experience both the creative process and the creation of a product.
- To have participants experience creative expression in a collaborative fashion.

Leader

1. Pass out a set of materials to each group.
2. Groups can only use what they are given to complete the creative task. They can not borrow from other groups or use materials outside of what they are given, including materials they may have brought with them.
3. The limits for the activity are:
 - This must be a group project
 - Use only the materials that you were given
 - Stick to designated time limit
4. Possible follow-up questions might include:
 - How did it feel to be required to produce a product?
 - How did it feel working as a group?
 - How did it feel having a limited supply and variety of materials?
 - When you were told to create a product, what did you first think of? A song, poem, picture, sculpture...? Tangible or intangible?
 - How did you respond to the materials given to you?
 - Did you follow the rules?
 - Were you missing a tool/materials that you really wanted? How did this feel?

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Handout 2: Red Light, Green Light, the Arts Version

Materials

Large paper and marker or blackboard

Room Arrangement

Open space large enough for the whole group to move freely

Time

20 minutes

Goal

- To involve the whole group in a creative movement activity that enhances knowledge of art concepts

Leader

1. Working with the entire group, generate a list of some art concepts such as *line*, *sharp*, *texture*, etc.
2. Next list some examples of each under the different headings. For example under texture, you might list *smooth*, *bumpy*, *rough*, etc.
3. Explain that you are going to take some of these art concepts and use them in a movement game that they may remember from children called Red Light, Green Light. Refresh their memories about the way the game is played.
 - One person is the leader and stands at one end of the room or hallway.
 - All the other participants stand together at the other end of the room.
 - The leader chooses a concept discussed earlier, for example, *bumpy*. The other participants have to move in a way that demonstrates *bumpy*, with the goal of being the first one to touch the leader.
 - The leader stands with her back to the group and when she says “green light,” the participants may move towards her, and when she says, “red light,” they must freeze.
 - The leader keeps looking over her shoulder to assess where the others are. She may send someone back if that person moves after she says “red light”.
 - People may also be sent back if the leader thinks that person isn’t moving “bumpy enough”.
 - The first one to reach the leader is the winner and the next leader. Then that new leader picks another art concept for people to move like.
 - The game continues until everyone has had a chance to be the leader, or until the participants seem to tire of it.

This activity comes from Robin Fawcett.

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Handout 3: Start with Words

Materials

An assortment of materials for creating—paper, yarn, fabric, markers, crayons, play dough or clay, stamps, etc. for the visual arts; drums, bells, tambourines, scarves, a selection of music etc. for music or movement. Materials can be anything that participants can use for creating.

Room Arrangement

Large work table if working with the visual arts; large open area for music or movement.

Time

20-30 minutes approximately—could do in a shorter time frame, too.

Goal

To acknowledge the creativity in everyone and to highlight the concept that you don't have to be an “artist” to be considered creative. Creativity involves using the familiar in new ways—as this exercise will show.

Leader

1. Put individual words such as anger, strength, power, quiet, curiosity on pieces of paper. Any descriptive word is fine. Alternately, put individual lines from a poem on pieces of paper.
2. Participants can work individually or in small groups of 2-3. Each individual or group picks a word or line from a poem.
3. The goal of the exercise is to use the word or line from a poem as a stimulus to create something from the available materials. If working in small groups, participants are to collaborate and create one piece of work.
4. When the work period is over, solicit feedback from the group about the process that they used to go from a word on a piece of paper to a piece of completed work. If participants have worked in groups, solicit feedback about how they collaborated? What was the hardest part of collaborating? What was the best part of collaborating?

Handout 4: Group Drawing Activity

Materials

Art postcards of a variety of art works—a mix of famous artists and local artists if possible, still lifes, landscapes, portraits, abstracts, etc. Have enough for everyone.

Markers, pastels, crayons

White drawing paper, 9 x 12 or 12 x 18, enough for 3 sheets each

Pushpins or masking tape

Room Arrangement

Tables and chairs, with a large blank wall or open floor space

Time

30-45 minutes

Goals

- To help participants overcome fears about drawing by participating in a non-judgmental, non-threatening drawing activity
- To view a variety of artist's work
- To learn more about how viewpoint and personal interpretation of artwork can vary among individuals

Leader

1. Have participants select a postcard, some drawing materials and three sheets of paper.
2. Explain that they are going to use this image as a starting point for a drawing of their own. Participants are not expected to re-create the image, but rather to use it as a jumping off point for their own drawing. For example, they could take one element of the artwork such as a tree and expand on that, or choose one color they like and do an entirely new drawing using that color.
3. Explain that there will be a short time limit for completing their drawing and this will keep things fresh and spontaneous. The time limit also helps them to not get hung up on trying to recreate the artwork. Start at the same time, and allow five minutes for them to work.
4. After five minutes, stop them, and collect the postcards. Then have them swap drawings with each other so everyone has a different person's drawing.
5. Now repeat the exercise again with a new piece of paper, this time using the drawing they just received as the jumping off point, just like they did with the postcard. Have participants start at the same time and work for five minutes again. They can change drawing materials if they wish, or use whatever they used before.
6. When the time is up, collect the drawings they were working from, and keep them in a pile marked #1.

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7. Have participants swap drawings again, and repeat the process one more time, using this new drawing as the starting point and drawing for five minutes. They may switch materials if they choose.
8. Collect the drawings and keep them in a pile marked # 2, and collect the drawings they did last and mark that pile #3.
9. Take the postcards used for the first drawings and put them up on the wall in such a way that the drawings can fit under them in rows. If there isn't enough wall space, lay them out on the floor.
10. Take the drawings marked #1 and have participants volunteer to help place them under the postcards they were generated from. Repeat this process with the drawings marked #2 and #3, placing them under the drawings they came from.
11. Spend a few minutes looking at the whole display and then discuss the process. How did it feel? What was it like to have a time limit? What did they learn from this exercise? What could you teach with this exercise?

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Handout 5: How Do You Use Your Creative Thinking? – A Checklist

	Yes	No
Do you add ingredients to written recipes?		
Do you mix and match the color of your clothes for a different look?		
Do you tap your feet to the beat of a rhythm?		
Do you sing in the shower? car? or anywhere?		
Do you ever write verses that rhyme? or don't rhyme?		
Do you arrange food so it looks beautiful to you?		
Do you discover shapes in clouds?		
Do you doodle?		
Have you ever lost the sense of time when doing something fun?		
Do you dress up (or make children's costumes) for special occasions?		
Do you take time to look for and make something that the receiver will really enjoy when selecting or making a present?		
Do you use gestures, voices and facial expressions when telling a joke?		
Do you dance by yourself when hearing a song you like?		
Do you sometimes wake up with a solution to a problem you've had for some time?		
Do you enjoy having fresh cut flowers in your home?		
Do you enjoy watching a beautiful sunset?		

If you responded "Yes" to several of these questions, you demonstrate flexible, creative thinking in several different ways.

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Handout 6: Group Sculpture

Materials needed:

Clay (1 to 2 lbs. per person) or play dough (grapefruit-sized piece per person)
Piece of plywood, stiff cardboard or other sturdy surface
Words on small pieces of paper and a container to pick a word out of (see leader instructions below.)

Room Arrangement:

Small groups with table space for each group, approx 3 feet square or larger.

Time:

25 minutes

Goals:

- Use clay to create a group sculpture
- Work in a spontaneous manner as children do.
- Identify the VELS Learning Goals that relate to this creative experience.

Leader:

1. Have participants form groups of 4-6 people. Each group sits together with a work surface of approximately three feet square.
2. Have someone from each group pick a word or theme out of the hat. Explain that they will collaborate to create a scene or sculpture on the theme they draw out of the hat. Allow about 15 minutes for the creation segment. Sample themes:

Circus	Farm
Zoo	Food
Under the ocean	Playground
Sesame Street	Snowy day
3. Facilitate the whole group in moving around the room to look at each sculpture. Model the kind of critique discussion you would like teachers to use with children.
4. Encourage people to ask questions of the artists, such as “tell me about this part” or “what is this animal doing?” or comments which describe details you see such as “the tiger looks ready to pounce” rather than comments which compare one person’s part with another.
5. Encourage discussion and questions about the process of working together to create the group sculpture. How did it work to be given a theme as a starting point? How would it be different if the group had been asked to create a theme and then build around it?
6. Ask participants to give examples of how this activity connected with VELS learning goals in the Creative Expression domain. Give examples of other domains this activity could address. Were some domains not addressed?

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Handout 7: Developmental Stages

The following chart summarizes the growth and development of young infants, mobile toddlers, and preschoolers. It is important to remember that children develop at their own pace and that within each age group children acquire skills at different times. The chart lists approximate age ranges rather than precise times when children acquire the listed skills.

	Social Emotional	Cognitive	Language	Art	Music	Movement & Dance	Drama/Play
Young Infant (Birth to 18 mos.)	Knows primary caregiver. Learns to expect the caregiver to respond to his/her signals in a predictable way. Responds to own name	Repeats own actions on objects. Imitates simple, familiar gestures. Retrieves a partially-hidden object.	Communicates through crying and other actions. Coos and smiles with adults. Begins babbling.	Visually follows slowly-moving objects. Shows sensitivity to changes in brightness. Prefers patterned to solid color forms.	Distinguishes among sounds. Shows preference for human voices and music. Enjoys listening to rhymes and songs while being rocked, stroked, patted.	Hits dangling objects. Claps and moves body in response to music. Loves dancing while being carried.	Imitates facial expressions and actions. Centers on own actions (waving arms, kicking legs). Plays with objects by exploring them. Responds to puppets and stuffed animals manipulated by an adult.
Mobile Infant (8 to 18 mos.)	Gets attached to persons) responsible for care. Cries when a stranger approaches. Begins to do things by him or herself.	Finds a completely hidden object, demonstrating awareness that objects exist when out of sight.	Responds to words and begins to use language to communicate needs ("milk," "play"). Says "da-da" and "ma-ma."	Holds large crayons and scribbles spontaneously. Explores to gain control of line pressure, color, directions.	Enjoys listening to music with rhythm and being sung to. Plays pat-a-cake and sings very simple songs. Enjoys sounds of rattles, bells, and music boxes.	Enjoys bouncing motions. Crawls, walks. Moves rhythmically when he or she hears recorded music.	Loves to play with objects. Shows interest in handling & playing with objects such as hats, shoes, belts.

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	Social Emotional	Cognitive	Language	Art	Music	Movement & Dance	Drama/Play
	Looks at pictures in a book	Uses a tool (such as a stick) to obtain object of sight.	Points to what he or she wants and to pictures.	Tries different ways of using paintbrush.			<p>Begins to play simple games (hide and seek).</p> <p>Can demonstrate how to do something ("how do you wash your hands?").</p>
Toddler (18-36 mos.)	<p>Learns to play with other children.</p> <p>Learns to do things without help (independence).</p> <p>Begins to accept some limits.</p>	<p>Uses simple objects to represent other objects. (For example, a box may represent a bed).</p> <p>Begins to think about something before doing it.</p>	<p>Asks many questions.</p> <p>Speaks using groups of words.</p> <p>Begins to communicate feelings and ideas.</p>	<p>Scribbles with crayons and washable markers in a more controlled way.</p> <p>Makes wavy lines/ circles with finger paints.</p> <p>Is naturally drawn to art activities.</p>	<p>Discovers cause and effect of sound when banging or shaking objects or toys.</p> <p>Enjoys the repetition of songs, stories, and instrumental sounds.</p> <p>Sings simple traditional songs and sometimes combines them with improvised songs.</p>	<p>Sways, claps, marches to music.</p> <p>Recognizes rhythms and begins to reproduce them.</p> <p>Imitates movement of others in response to instructions such as "move like a tree," "roll like a barrel."</p>	<p>Begins to enjoy dramatic or make-believe play usually revolving around familiar themes, such as housekeeping.</p> <p>Uses props that are realistic.</p> <p>Loves to imitate others.</p> <p>Plays his or her own game alongside of peers.</p> <p>Enjoys acting out parts of stories with an adult.</p>

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	Social Emotional	Cognitive	Language	Art	Music	Movement & Dance	Drama/Play
Preschooler (3-5 years)	<p>Learns to play with other children.</p> <p>Is eager for new experiences (initiative).</p> <p>Plays cooperatively with peers, can take turns and observe rules.</p> <p>Expresses feelings verbally.</p>	<p>Imitates an action some time after observing it.</p> <p>Understands concepts such as numbers, size, weight, color, texture, distance, time and position.</p> <p>Focuses on one aspect of things at a time.</p>	<p>Talks in complete sentences.</p> <p>Can retell a familiar story or invent a new one.</p> <p>Talks to him/herself to guide dramatic play. (For example, says, "now we are going to eat" to the doll.)</p>	<p>Begins to draw things and name them.</p> <p>Colors pictures as he or she wishes.</p> <p>Draws objects that float all over the page.</p>	<p>Has a large repertoire of songs.</p> <p>Enjoys creating songs when playing.</p> <p>Enjoys performing alone as well as in a group.</p>	<p>Pretends with movements to be a horse, a rabbit, a butterfly.</p> <p>Creates and performs traditional dances.</p> <p>Is able to maintain a steady beat accompaniment.</p>	<p>Acts out stories using realistic props.</p> <p>Begins to enjoy playing house or playing doctor with other children.</p> <p>Elaborates and expands pretend play, developing fantasy themes that involve many actors and often continue for several days.</p> <p>Enjoys participating in teacher-initiated drama activities.</p>

Sources:

Andress, B. Music for Young Children. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace, 1998.

Davidson, J. Emerging Literacy and Dramatic Play. NY: Delmar Publishers, 1998.

Head Start Bureau, Nurturing Children, Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community. Head Start: Washington, DC

Lally, R. A Guide to Social Emotional Growth and Socialization. CA: Dept of Education, 1990.

Lasky, L. and Mujerji, R (1982) Art: Basic for Young Children. NAEYC: Washington, DC, 1982

Task Force on Children's Learning and the Arts. Young Children and the Arts: Making Creative Connections. Washington, DC: Goals 2000 Art Education Partnership, 1998.

Handout 8: Rainbow Placemats for Everyone

Materials

11 x 18 construction paper
Scissors
Tissue Paper
Glue or glue sticks
Paint (tempera or water colors)
Paintbrushes

Room Arrangement

Participants should have tables to work at.

Time

15 minutes

Goals

- Engage in a creative product-oriented activity.
- Experience supportive and encouraging comments from an adult
- Experience discouraging comments from an adult.
- Experience using poor quality tools that are necessary for completion of a project.
- Identify attitudes and tools that promote children's creativity.

Leader

1. Distribute construction paper and tell participants they are going to simulate an art exploration similar to one that would take place in an early childhood program. Tell them they are going to make Rainbow Placemats as part of their unit on The Sky, which they will use during snack and mealtimes.
2. Show them an example of a placemat you created to give them an idea of what they will have completed.
3. Have glue, brushes, tissue paper, and paints available around the table for them to share. Mix in some tools and materials that are of poor quality such as scissors that don't cut well; paint that is too drippy; and dried up glue or glue sticks.
4. Begin with encouraging comments that communicate your confidence that they will make a beautiful placemat that will express their unique gifts of creativity. Offer your assistance with obtaining and sharing the materials.

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5. As they proceed in creating their placemat, shift to using unsupportive comments that communicate a hidden agenda: that there is a right or wrong way to make a rainbow; or that compares one person's work to another, or to the model you presented. Make comments that communicate time pressure and a need to finish this activity in order to cover everything in the workshop.
6. End by praising and displaying certain placemats and critiquing others.
7. Close the activity by identifying how the leader's supportive or discouraging comments influenced the participant's feelings about their work, creativity and self-concept.

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Handout 9: Does Your Classroom Encourage Creativity?

	Yes	No
Do adults model creativity with activities such as singing made-up songs and creating stories using puppets?		
Do adults incorporate children's interests or unexpected events into the curriculum?		
Are a variety of materials that can be used in different ways, appropriate for the ages and developmental levels of the children, available and periodically replenished?		
Are both handmade and commercially-made materials available, such as musical instruments, dress-up clothes and props, collage materials, and different types of paints?		
Are children free to choose to play or not to play in the special interest area or to engage in a particular activity?		
Do children have a place where they can leave unfinished creations and continue working on them at a later time?		
Do children have age-appropriate opportunities to participate in guided group activities, such as listening to music together, engaging in directed and free-style music, dance, movement, and dramatic activities, or reading and acting out a story?		
Are preschool children introduced to new ideas and projects by adults who ask questions and brainstorm with them?		
Are all children provided with opportunities to be successful?		
Are children given opportunities to learn, communicate, and express themselves through art, music, dance, dramatic play, drama, and language?		
Do adults encourage and support children's creative expression by getting down to the children's level, describing their activities, and asking open-ended questions?		
Are projects that can be completed in only one way (including coloring books, paint-by-number), avoided?		

The more questions you responded “Yes”, the greater the potential that your classroom environment nurtures creativity.

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Handout 10: Creating an Action Plan

Adult attitudes and behaviors to strengthen in support of creative expression	Adult attitudes and behaviors to diminish that discourage creative expression	Changes to my environment and equipment, including resources	By when	How will I know I’m successful

Handout 11: Scenarios

Scenario #1

Your new assistant teacher is great with the children, and you are happy to have her in the program. One day she comes to you and says, “please put me anywhere but in the art area—I really can’t draw a straight line”.

Scenario #2

Your local arts council approached you as director of your early childhood program and asked you to apply for a \$5000 grant to develop an arts enrichment program. What would you want to include in this proposal? Make sure you address materials, professional development and community resources you would access in your arts enrichment program. Provide a rationale for your proposed activity.

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Art Supplies List

Aleene's Tacky Glue
Art gum, pink pearl, and kneaded erasers
Ballpoint pens
Beads, feathers, sequins
Binder clips
Brads
Brayers, rubber ones like Speedball
Buckets for mixing plaster—flexible plastic
Burlap and/or canvas pieces for putting down on tables for clay work
Cardboard scraps
Clay tools, cookie cutters, sculpting tools, extruders for clay
Colored construction paper, various sizes
Crayola washable tempera paint (don't skimp here, Crayola is best)
Crayons-regular colors, fluorescent, glitter
Drawing pencils (ebony are nice)
Duct tape
Eyedroppers
Fabric paints and markers
Fabric scraps
Foam core scraps
Gel pens
Glitter
Glossy coated paper for marker work
Glue sticks
Good pencil sharpener with different sized holes
Good quality pottery clay
Masking tape and colored masking tape
Mat board scraps
Metallic markers
Needles and thread
Oak tag in white and colors
Oil based clay in a variety of colors
Oil pastels

Pan watercolors
Paper clips
Paper donated and scrounged
Plaster gauze
Plaster of Paris
Plastic containers for water and paint
Plastic trays, sheets of Plexiglas or cookie sheets for printmaking
Plastic water pitchers
Play dough
Printmaking paper with texture
Regular colored pencils
Scissors-Fiskars are best and well worth the price
Regular & double-sided Scotch tape
Scratch art paper
Scratch foam sheets for printmaking
Sharpie permanent markers
Small plastic containers for casting plaster—flexible plastic
Spray bottles
Staplers and staples
String
Student grade acrylic paints in bottles
Student grade watercolor paper
Variety of brushes for watercolor and tempera
Washable markers in large and fine point
Washable white glue
Water based printmaking ink (Speedball is good)
Watercolor pencils
White drawing paper, various sizes
Wire in variety of colors and thicknesses
Wood scraps
Yarn

This list was developed by Jude Bond

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Creative Expression Professional Resources

Edwards, C.P. & K.W. Springate. Encouraging Creativity in Early Childhood Classrooms. Urbana, IL: ERIC Digest, 1995.

Drew, W.F & B. Rankin. "Promoting Creativity for Life Using Open-Ended Materials." Young Children. 59 (4): 38-45, 2004.

The Vermont Arts Council. Learning and Growing with the Arts: A Resource Guide for Working with Young Children. Vermont Arts Council, 2003.
www.vermontartscouncil.org/hsap

For a Child, Life is a Creative Adventure: Supporting Development and Learning Through Art, music, Movement, and Dialogue. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children and Families, Head Start Bureau,

Von Oech, R. A Whack on the Side of the Head: How to Unlock Your Mind for Innovation. New York: Warner Books, 1983.

Henri, R. and M. Ryerson. The Art Spirit: Notes, Articles, Fragments of Letters and Talks to Students, Bearing on the Concept and Technique of Picture Making, the Study of Art Generally, and on Appreciation. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1958

Visual Understanding in Education. What is VTS?
<http://www.vue.org/whatisvts.html>

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Supplemental Material

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